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ABSTRACT

This essay is intended to assist teachers in helping students develop the art of resume writing. The curriculum outlined is based on prewriting, writing, and rewriting and on using sample entry-level resumes to illustrate basic resume do's and don'ts. The first section outlines the importance of good resumes and the pitfalls of having vocational students use either standardized, fill-in-the-blank type resumes or the customized resumes that are often produced by writing services or through resume workshops. The resume-writing process proposed entails (1) a prewriting stage, in which students must develop vocabulary to describe their abilities and attitudes; (2) a proof stage, in which students identify indicators proving their claims of possessing a certain skill; (3) a writing stage, in which students draft a resume describing the skills they have identified by using clusters of pertinent verbs, names of tools and specific skills, names of pieces of special equipment, and words describing various special skills; (4) a reading stage, in which students read sample resumes to identify more vocabulary, alternative ways of highlighting different types of skills, and weaknesses and strengths of different types of resumes; and (5) a writing and editing stage, in which students are told to write at least three drafts of their resume. Two alternatives to full-blown resumes, the work strengths summary and job wanted cards, are also discussed as alternatives for use with special education students or in vocational programs that do not lend themselves to having students develop complete resumes. (MN)

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WRITE INTO A JOB

By Martin Kimeldorf and Carolyn Bradley

BRIDGING GAPS

As diploma requirements increase, electives have been crowded out of students' schedules. One of the curriculums suffering cuts is the area of vocational, life-centered education. Because of this, the gap is widening between real world instruction and specific academic instruction.

Resume writing combines the best of academic and vocational disciplines. This essay will describe how quality resume writing and resume alternatives can be taught based on a new curriculum called *Write Into A Job*. The curriculum has been field tested by both regular and special educators in English, study skills and career education classes.

There is a gap in the field of resume writing curriculums. Typically, a teacher must choose between short superficial approaches or long intensive approaches written for professionals in search of work.

The short approach is often based on the concept that *one resume format fits everyone*. Students fill in blanks and the computer printer grinds out the clones. This resume becomes a shopping list of dates and titles. It is not worth writing and most employers find it not worth reading.

At the other extreme are the resume writing services, books and entire seminars focused on the customized resume. This approach tends to make the document an end in itself The result is that college students sweat out compiling a resume and then employ the *mail-and-wait* method. They conduct mail campaigns with less than 2% returns (offers for interviews), insulating themselves from employers.

We can bridge the curriculum gap between these two extremes by using curriculums based on pre-writing, writing and rewriting. Filling the gap by using examples of entry-level resumes makes it easier to teach the subject.

Resumes can be powerful job search training tools. Their impact on self-esteem for people who have rarely seen themselves in print. is well documented. When working with incarcerated youth we found that the first resume copies get sent to relatives and friends. Resumes can be used not just in the mail, but also during interviews and when networking for job leads or seeking letters of reference These techniques are outlined in an earlier book, *Job Search Education* . And finally, resumes offer their most powerful lesson when they teach job seekers how to identify and articulate their marketable skills.

Often job seekers are not able to describe their skills convincingly during a job interview. Take the example of a young woman, Veronica, who is applying for a retail job in a clothing store. The employer asks her about her previous work at the Clothes Line store and she says:

> I worked in The Clothes Line as a salesperson and window decorator.

This is just like the single line entry on the shopping-list resume. Suppose Veronica was taught how to *paint a picture with words*. Suppose Veronica was taught how to identify key vocabulary words related to retail sales. Veronica would learn how to fully describe where, when, what and how well she performed the job. Her resume entry and subsequent answer to a job interview question might look like this:

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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Customer Service, Clothesline Store, 1986-1987
Worked two years in a busy downtown clothes store serving dozens of customers. Decorated windows, tagged clothes, set up store displays, handled customer complaints, and operated a cash register. Learned to handle new responsibilities all the time. My employer complimented me for courtesy to customers. My employer asked me to train other workers because I learned quickly.

This is called a resume *entry*. It is made up of two parts. The underlined section is called the *lead* and the subsequent proof or text is called a *skill statement*. In the program *Write Into A Job* students spend a good deal of time writing skill statements. These skill statements can then be used later in resumes or resume alternatives. The skill statement follows the current instructional vogue that employs the *natural writing process* and this will be described next.

NATURAL RESUME WRITING PROCESS

Today we know that simply writing 500 word compare-and-contrast essays often fosters a dislike of writing. In earlier writing programs one learned grammar rules and then applied them in wrist-breaking essays. Today, we take are process approach to writing. Students must first conceptualize or brainstorm during the pre-writing phase. Then the student writes a first draft, often after looking at exemplary or model writing. Finally, we teach grammar and editing during the last polishing or rewriting step. These three steps can be embodied in resume writing as well.

In pre-writing, the student must develop vocabulary words to describe his or her abilities and attitudes. Notice that we scrupulously avoid asking people to describe their skills or achievements. Most people assume they have none. Instead, we might present a student with a list of words about attitudes like being responsible. A partial list could look like this:

I Am Responsible Because:
__ I am punctual and on time--I call whenever I am going to be late.
__ I have good attendance.
__ I can follow directions or ask when I am unsure.
__ I try to do a very good job and usually make few mistakes
__ I don't take short cuts. I do *all* the work that is required
__ I stay at the job until it is done.

After the student identifies indicators of being responsible the specific skill must be proven. An example of how to write a proof is shown to the student as:

X I have good attendance
A Proof from school
I was always on time for the soccer team. I was the team manager and I never missed a game.

Then the student must write a proof. This writing gets the student used to building skill statements.

After finding words to describe general work habits like being responsible, being cooperative, and being easy to train, the student can be taken into specific occupational skill areas. In *Write Into A Job* , job skill words are clustered into 4 occupational clusters: working outdoors; with people; with tools and equipment; in offices. Each area has its own

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list of words that the student describes. The words include past tense verbs and names of tools and specific skills. For instance, suppose a student wants a job in the service area. He begins by circling words (or writing his own that describe a past experience. The following list is an example:

taught	tutored	tested	trained	coached
disciplined	cared for	nursed	examined	administered
hosted	escorted	entertained	protected	served
transported	supervised	recruited	managed	coordinated
sold	promoted	dramatized	influenced	debated
elected	pursuaded	displayed	marketed	planned lessons

Next, the student is presented with more words about special equipment. Some words from the equipment list include:

wheelchairs	sports equipment	recreation equipment
audio-visual	health aids or	beauty aids and cosmetics

Finally, we look for words that describe special skills

testing	serving old people	child development
lesson planning	advising others	active listening
goal setting	weight training	drug counseling/abuse

The student combines all of this new vocabulary into skill statements.

This is followed by reading sample resumes. The samples or models help students identify still more ideas and words. In effect, the mind becomes saturate with ideas. This makes writing easier. There are over 30 sample resumes for entry level jobs in *Write Into A Job* These resumes cover such occupations as food service, cosmetology, day care, custodial, laborer, gardener, and receptionist . Each resume begins with background about the job seeker, followed by commentary and questions about the strategy employed. Students then record ideas they want to use on a separate page. Next is a sample resume of Monty:

See sample resume below

Monty gets his best grades in auto shop. Someday he wants to stop pumping gas at Fred's Gas for Less and work in the garage. Therefore, Monty put his gas station job last and his auto mechanic skills first. Put your most important skills first.

MONTY HOLGATE
12995 SW Riverfront Terrace Butteville OR 555-4370

JOB GOAL: Auto Service/Parts Trainee

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education In Basic Repair

Advanced Auto Mechanics Class, Marshal Voc-Tech 1986-1988.
Technical Skills Learned a variety of auto service procedures and tools. Included: valve grinding, brake and steering adjustments & repair, basic tune-ups, engine and transmissions.

Knowledge of Tools and Equipment

Can operate a variety of tools including diagnostic testing.
I have learned to operate machine tools safely, as well as how to clean the equipment safely. Machines include: Dyna-mo,Sun Scopes, Dwell Meters, Distributor Tester, and Cylinder Honer.

Motivated and Responsible

I was so interested in the class that I stayed late whenever possible. Later, was asked to be a shop foreman. Responsibilities included tool inventory and clean up. My highest grades in school are in Auto Mechanics: 3.5 GPA.

SUCCESSFUL WORK EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Oriented

Fred's Gas For Less, Service Attendant, 1988.
Worked 20 hours week after School. Operated cash register with over $600 receipts. Used credit card machines. Did oil and tire changes. Customers often asked for me by name. Sold additional products: blades, batteries, tires, fluids.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

All my life I have had a personal love affair with cars and machines. In my spare time I read magazines about the auto world. I enjoy hard physical labor and working with tools. It is my dream to someday end up in this field. I have good health and rarely missed a day at school.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT MONTY'S RESUME?
Monty uses some additional words in the left hand margin in **bold** letters. These are called sub-headings. If you would want to use sub-headings write down "see Monty's layout" on your resume journal page. If you like the way Monty put his name and goal in **bold** type and centered be sure to note this also.

Monty used the names of lots of tools and equipment. Make a note to list the names of tools or equipment you can use. Monty also used lots of numbers about the cash register. He had to make a guess at this by asking another gas station attendant for advice. What numbers could you use? What do you think of his personal statement at the end? Monty wanted to end his resume with a bang. He used the strongest words he could to describe his passion for cars.

RESUME ALTERNATIVES

Resumes are not for all programs. Your students may not have the endurance or capacity to write full-blown, quality resumes. You might not have time to teach the entire curriculum. Or, your students may prefer the shorter resume alternatives. These alternatives have been used with special education students who have great difficulty writing. Typically, the teacher assists a great deal in the final production by helping with typing and printing. There is not time here to discuss the many uses of resume alternatives and their production. However, some illustrations of their uses follows.

The Work Strengths Summary

This product is based on the Job Power Report first introduced by Bernard Haldane. It has many uses. You will notice that the Work Strengths Summary simply divides skills into best attitudes and abilities. The key word is on the left and the proofs (or skill statements) are on the right. The job seekers need not know the exact job they are applying for. Or the job seekers may not want to limit their job search to a particular job in a small labor market.

See Picture A: Work Strengths Summary

Susan Wright can visit several friends or helpers asking: "This is a list of my skills. Can you suggest places where these skills might be useful?" Susan thus learns a valuable networking method. Then Susan can approach employers and say, "This is a list of my skills, do you have any positions where these skills would be useful?" In the second instance, Susan learns how to directly bid for a job.

Job Wanted Cards

This was first suggested by Richard Lathrop and later endorsed and widely used by the largest job search organization in America: JIST Inc. This is simply a business card for job seekers. It can be attached to applications, windshields, bulletin boards, etc. It is easy to write and job seekers seem to really enjoy having them. Unlike a Work Strengths Summary, the job seeker must have a specific job in mind.

MARTIN JONES Ph: 555-4095

JOB WANTED: Office and Rental Cleaning

EXPERIENCE: Five years experience cleaning homes. I'm a detailed stove cleaner, remarkable refrigerator cleaner, wonderful window washer. I run a mean vacuum. Bathrooms, no problem.

Available: Evening or Weekends. Prefer East Multnomah County

ENERGETIC RELIABLE SELF-STARTER

If the entire process is completed, students produce both the resume alternatives and a resume. The goal is to avoid worksheet resume clones and long drawn out books on resume writing. As a result, students can produce a Work Strengths Summary or a Help Wanted Card by the third or fourth week. At this point they can use the document in networking and job finding and later return to the class setting to complete a resume.This gives the course a nice back-and-forth rhythm between writing and community experiences.

FINAL STAGES: WRITING AND EDITING

The student is told that it is not unusual to go through at least three drafts before a final version is produced. This is consistent with the new writing process that emphasizes rewriting or editing. Some of our best writing flourishes occur during the rewriting stage.

After basic copy is generated, the student must consider design and layout. This concerns a set of questions about appearance. This can include questions like:

What order should items appear in?
How should the top (name, address, phone line) appear?
What kinds of headings should be used?
How wide should margins be; how much white space should be used?
What about 2 column versus single column layout?
What about type size, fonts, and bold italic and other style effects?

By now you realize that we have entered into the age of word processing and desktop publishing. As laser printing and page layout software become more commonplace we will all become more design conscious. To help the student along this path, the resume parts are labelled. Layout terms are introduced. The student is taken one step at a time through the process of both writing and designing a nice looking resume. Next is an illustration of the terms used in resume layout.

See Picture B: Sample Resume Labelled

Students are taught to *proof before you goof.* This is the final stage before printing. I would like to end with a resume writing checklist that might be helpful in your own resume writing instruction.

RESUME EDITING CHECKLIST ✍ ✍ ✍

__ All of the resume statements support my **Beginning Job Goal.**
__ The experiences that are most important are put first. These are the experiences that have skills closest to the job I want.
__ All of my experiences tell how well I did the job.
__ I have removed extra, unneeded words. The word "I" does not appear too often.
__ Action words begin sentences when possible.
__ I have lots of white space, I did not fill the page. It does not look cramped. My margins and indents are simple.
__ Name, address, and phone number are centered or balanced at the top.
__ Important Headings or Sub-Heads or Leads Lines are CAPITALIZED, <u>underlined</u> or typed in **bold** letters.
__ My grammar is consistent. I use periods the same way throughout. I didn't abbreviate. I capitalized only beginnings of lists or sentences and special words.
__ The resume is neat and clean and ready for quick printing.
__ It has been read by three people who checked for spelling and wording.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

Job Search Education . Kimeldorf. 1984.
The Workbook. Farr et. al. JIST. 1982.
Job Power. Bernard Haldane. 1982.

WORK STRENGTHS SUMMARY: SUSAN WRIGHT

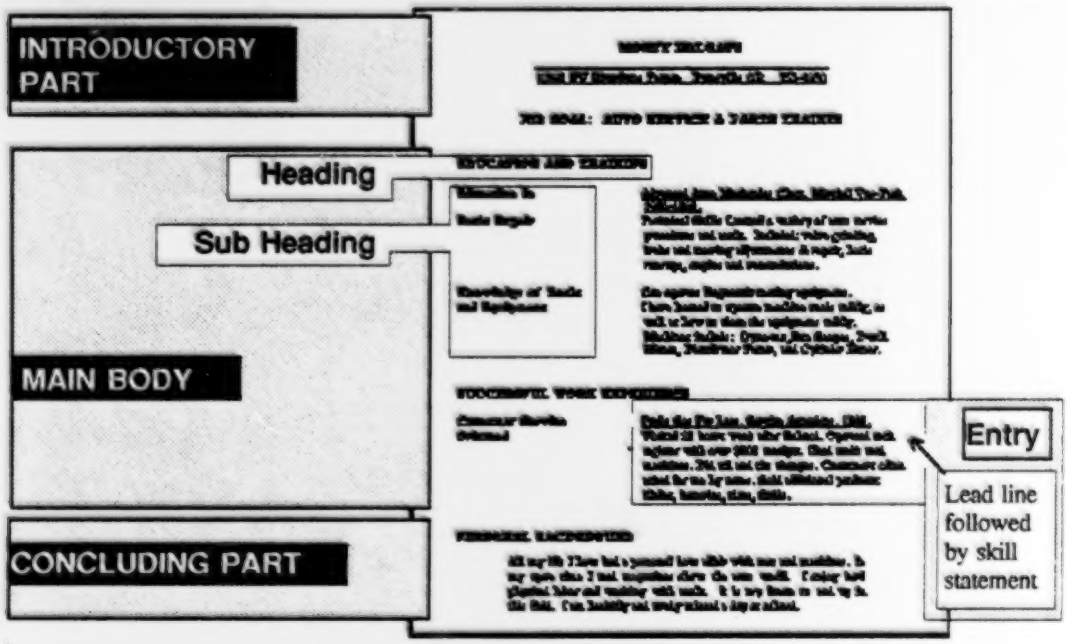
1634 S.E. Oak St New Castle, CA 98576Ph-555-0091

MY BEST ATTITUDES	EXAMPLES
Take pride in my work	Quality Clothes Making. Make my own clothes. Often asked where I buy my clothes! Made clothes for several people.
Friendly	New Student Host. Asked to show new students around school. Hosted over 8 new students in last 2 years.

MY BEST ABILITIES	EXAMPLES
Train and Help People	Playground Aide. Worked with handicapped children at the Central City Parks. Volunteered 3 summers and asked back each time. 1985-1988.
	Vancouver Vocational Tech. Earned a grade of A in Child Development class.
Work Creatively With My Hands	1986 Honorable Mention. Several arts and crafts classes at school. Some of my work won awards in school exhibits.

Picture B: The Parts Of A Resume

Below on the right is Monty's resume . The main part of Monty's resume are listed below in the **Gray Areas** with labels in black boxes. The minor parts are in boxes.



INTRODUCTORY PART
The first part is the Personal Data Area. In this area you put your Name, address, phone number.The next part is a Job Goal. Not all resume have one.

MAIN BODY
This section contains most of your information. It is here that you will place the skill statements you started writing in Unit# 2. The skill statements are put groupedtogether. For example, all of Monty's auto class experience were grouped under Education and Training .

Before each group Monty typed in capital letters a Heading. He also used sub-headings on the left hand side in bold type. These are described next.

Headings describe each group of skills. Headings are like chapters in a book. Headings are typed in all capital letters. To give them even more impact the headings can also be put in **bold** or <u>underline</u> type.

Sub-headings are often added in later. These are one to three words that sit by themselves and call attention to your skill. These words really grab the attention of the emloyer. Think of sub-headings as neon signs announcing your talents.

Sub-headings are not as important as headings. Therefore, they only get the first letter in each word capitalized.Sub-Heading can also be put in underlined or bold type.

The Lead begins each skill statement. A Lead uses only a few capitol letters and underlining. This short statement leads the employer into your skill statement. It announces the name of the class, job, date, or source of pride. A lead together with a skill statement is called an entry.

CONCLUDING PART
This area is used to list your references, additional details or intresting personal information (hobbies, interests or volunteer work)